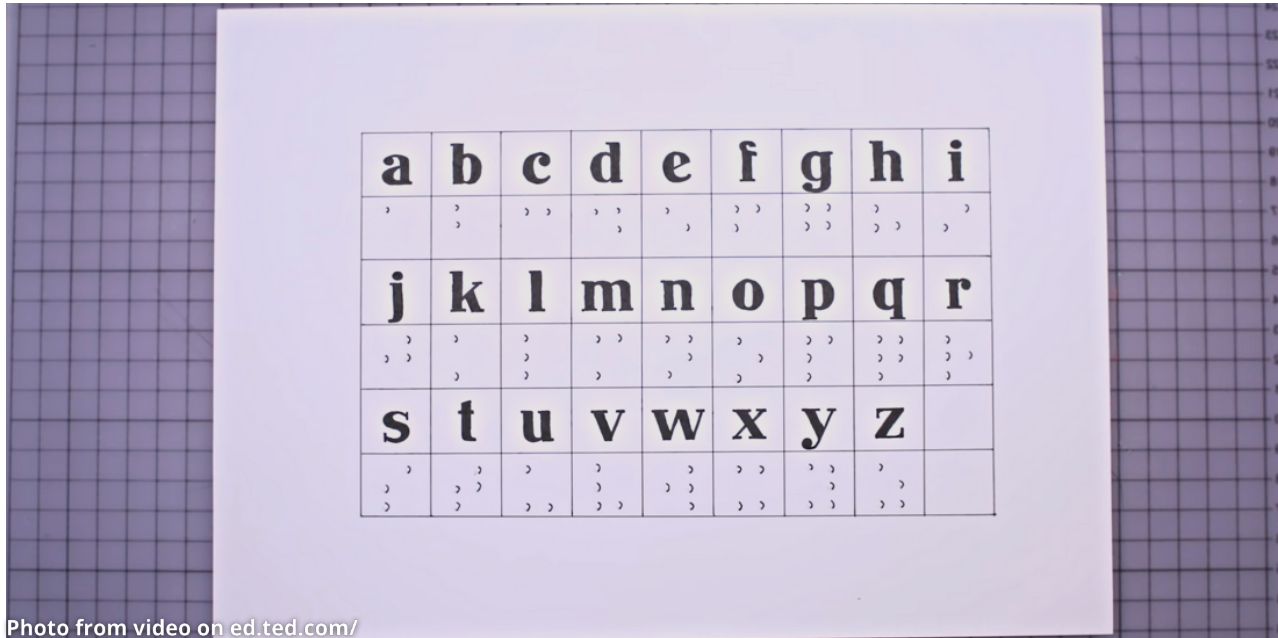


TED TALK: HOW BRAILLE WAS INVENTED

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR AMERICAN SPACES

This discussion guide is designed for programming at American Spaces. American Spaces should work with their Public Affairs Section to ensure that this topic and video are appropriate for American Spaces audiences.



VIDEO INFORMATION

Video Title: *How Braille was Invented* | Moments of Vision 9 - Jessica Oreck

Year Release: 2017

Duration: 2 min

English Level: Upper-Intermediate

Creator: Jessica Oreck

Themes: Education, Disabilities Inclusion

[Link to Video](#)

VIDEO CONTEXT

People who are blind or visually impaired often rely on braille to understand written text. Made up of raised dots, braille allows people with low vision to feel and understand letters with their fingertips. Over the years, braille has become the universally accepted system of writing for the blind. It is not a language but a code that has been translated into almost every language. However, braille was invented for an entirely different reason. In this brief video, viewers can learn about the surprising details regarding the history and origins of braille.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Jessica Oreck is a film director and animator who creates educational content for TED. In her video series, *In a Moment of Vision*, Oreck describes the history of common but often overlooked aspects of our environment, such as braille!



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT of STATE
Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

KEY VOCABULARY

Braille - a system that allows people with visual impairments to read and write through touch. Braille characters consist of up to six raised dots arranged in cells.

Visual Impairment - a decrease in the ability to see that can not be fixed through glasses or other usual means.

Tactile - designed to be perceived by touch.

Literacy - the ability to read and write, as well as interpret and communicate effectively.

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Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever noticed braille in your everyday surroundings? If so, where do you usually see it?
2. Why did Charles Barbier call his original code "night writing?"
3. Who took Barbier's idea and evolved it into the system of braille we use today?
4. Given the rise of assistive audio technology, why is braille still important today? For example, what can a book written in braille provide that an audiobook doesn't?

Additional Resources

[Edutopia: Assistive Technologies](#)

[ShareAmerica: Equality for Americans with Disabilities Act](#)

[ShareAmerica: Students with disabilities excel at American universities](#)

